

Sports

Sunday, September 1, 2024

JOURNALSTAR.COM/SPORTS

SECTION D

MURRAY TOO MUCH FOR HORNNED FROGS



KATY COWELL PHOTOS, JOURNAL STAR

Nebraska celebrates a kill by Harper Murray (center) during the first set of the match against TCU on Saturday at the Devaney Sports Center.

Sophomore hitter's 20 kills lead Nebraska to four-set win

BRENT C. WAGNER
Lincoln Journal Star

During one set on Saturday, the Nebraska volleyball team showed it can make a comeback, and during another set, the Huskers came up just short of another comeback.

In the final set, the Huskers put TCU away for good for a four-set win — 25-15, 25-23, 23-25, 25-13 at the Devaney Sports Center.

It came during the final match of the Ameritas Players Challenge as Nebraska went 3-0 during the first week of the season.

Sophomore outside hitter Harper Murray led the Huskers with 20 kills — 19 came over the final three sets. She had seven kills in the clinching fourth set.

Lindsay Krause added nine kills, and Merritt Beason had eight kills and two ace serves.



VOLLEYBALL SATURDAY

Nebraska 3, TCU 1
(25-15, 25-23, 23-25, 25-13)



LOOK: To see more photos from Saturday's Nebraska volleyball match, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. [NEWSVU](#)

TCU extended the match by winning the third set 25-23. Nebraska had rallied from deficits of 13-10 and 21-20 to take a 22-21 lead. But TCU won three straight points

Please see **VOLLEYBALL**, Page D3



Nebraska's Laney Choboy (6) dives for a ball against TCU on Saturday.

PREP FOOTBALL

Five stars who shined on the gridiron

Oakland-Craig duo, Christian's Wegrzyn made big plays

CHRIS BASNETT
Lincoln Journal Star

The first week of the 2024 high school football season provided plenty of highlights. Here are the Journal Star's Five Stars of the week after the opening weekend of games.

Braylon Anderson and Corbin Guill, Oakland-Craig: Anderson, a senior quarterback, completed 17 of 24 passes for 448 yards and three touchdowns.

Guill, another senior, caught seven of those passes for 287 yards and two scores.

Both yardage totals were school records as the Class C-2 No. 5-ranked Knights defeated Yutan, 34-14.

Asa Wegrzyn, Lincoln Christian: Christian's bruising fullback had 15 carries for 228 yards and two touchdowns in Christian's 28-14 win over Lincoln Lutheran in the battle for the Spirit Sword.

Wegrzyn's first touchdown covered 84 yards. His second, a 47-yarder early in the fourth quarter, provided the game's final score.

Jack Bullis, Hampton: Bullis went wild against Parkview Christian, scoring eight touchdowns in a 72-28 Hampton win.

Bullis ran 12 times for 151 yards and four scores, caught three passes for 189

Please see **FOOTBALL**, Page D3

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Lutheran names court after Ziegler

NOAH DOUGLAS
Lincoln Journal Star

The Class B No. 6 Waverly volleyball team held off a rally from C-2 No. 1 Lincoln Lutheran on Thursday night to down the Warriors 25-18, 25-19, 15-25, 24-26, 15-10 to open the 2024 volleyball season with a thriller at Lincoln Lutheran.

The back-and-forth affair came after Lutheran honored longtime coach Sue Ziegler by naming the Warriors' home court after her. Ziegler has brought five state titles, 560 wins and 13 state tournament appearances to the school.

"I'm humbled, grateful, and thankful," Ziegler said. "This school has meant a lot to me, and this volleyball program has been my heart and soul for 27 years now."

"It's about the people who have passed through here over the years. It's not just the current team; it's what has transpired since girls started to believe

Please see **ZIEGLER**, Page D3

INSIDE: More coverage of Waverly's five-set win over Lincoln Lutheran. **Page D3**



LOOK: To see more photos from Thursday's match, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. [NEWSVU](#)

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PREP GLANCE

LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR

Norris girls cross country edges out Elkhorn North for title

The Norris girls took first at the John Voota invite, their home meet, on Saturday, scoring 22 points and narrowly defeating Elkhorn North who came in runner-up with 23. Lincoln High finished in third with 84 points and Lincoln Northeast in fifth with 97.

Kendall Zavala led the Titans with a first-place individual finish, running a 18:19.91. Teammate Atlee Wallman finished right behind her with a 18:26.56. Lincoln Northeast's Sam-mara Alfayo was the lone city runner who finished in the top 10, placing fourth with a 19:30.46.

On the boys side, Omaha Skutt won the team title with 28 points, while Beatrice finished as runner-up with 57. The SkyHawks Tommy Rice placed first individually, running a 15:40.03. Lincoln High's Hutton Rettig finished in eighth with a 16:50.24.

Norris placed fourth as a team with 68 points and Lincoln High was right behind them with 69.

VOLLEYBALL

Omaha Marian def. Lincoln Pius X, 2-1: The Class B No. 3 Thunderbolts fell to the Class A No. 9 Crusaders in three sets on Saturday at the Bellevue West invite, losing 28-26, 24-26, 25-22. The loss drops Pius X to 1-3 to start the year. Pius X defeated Marian in three sets on Friday, so the two teams have slip for the year so far.

Gretna East def. Lincoln Northeast, 2-0: Facing the Class B No. 5 Griffins, Lincoln Northeast lost the first set 25-16 and played a closer second but lost it, 25-21. The Rockets won their two other matches at their home invite, defeating Bellevue East 25-16 and Lincoln Southeast, 18-25, 26-24, 25-21.

Gretna East def. Lincoln Southeast, 2-0: The Knights also fell to the Griffins, losing 25-11, 25-21. Lincoln Southeast fell to 0-4 with the loss with its next match on Tuesday at Lincoln East.

PREP VOLLEYBALL



KATY COWELL, JOURNAL STAR

Waverly celebrates after defeating Lincoln Lutheran in five sets Thursday at Lincoln Lutheran High School.

Launsteins show growth

Twins from Waverly lead Vikings past Lincoln Lutheran

NOAH DOUGLAS
Lincoln Journal Star

For the second consecutive year, Lincoln Lutheran and Waverly kicked off the high school volleyball season with a bang.

Waverly won in five sets Thursday at Lutheran: 25-19, 25-18, 15-25, 24-26, 15-10.

Lutheran beat Waverly in five sets last season. Thursday was the seventh year in a row the two teams opened the season against each other.

"It feels like a five-set slugfest every single year," Waverly head coach Terri Neujahr said. "There really isn't a better match to start the year.

"You really find out where you're at and what your team's got."

Both Waverly and Lincoln Lutheran displayed tremendous grit. With the match tied at two sets apiece, the endurance of each team was evident, with every point eliciting louder cheers and grander celebrations from both benches. The Lauenstein twins — Hallie and Gracie — went toe-to-toe with Lily Wohlgemuth and Ava Jurevicius, highlighting the remarkable determination of both teams.

Ultimately, the Lauenstein twins did just enough to push Waverly over the edge and defeat the three-time reigning state champions.

"Both teams will have a list of things to work on, but man, I couldn't be more proud of my team right now," Neujahr said.

"We got it handed to us in the third and fourth sets, but they came back bigger and stronger in the fifth and never gave up. They are so young, and I am so proud of them."

As the Vikings matured throughout last season's state tournament, the Lauenstein sisters grew into their highlighted roles. Hallie dominated Thursday night with 14 kills, while Gracie contributed seven of her own. The twins also combined for six aces.

"They have shown so much growth and confidence in what they're doing," Neujahr said. "They are so dynamic and versatile, always willing to adjust to the next play. Last year, it took them a while to trust that we knew what we were doing, but now they just do it automatically and bring so much to our team."

Limiting the Lauenstein duo

proved difficult, and Lincoln Lutheran coach Sue Ziegler was aware of their potential.

"We knew they would be good, and we had scouted them," Ziegler said. "One of our goals was to slow them down, but they did well because they used them a lot and moved the ball effectively."

However, Nebraska commit and Lincoln Lutheran libero Keri Leimbach did her part to prevent the duo from having an even stronger performance. Leimbach showcased her athleticism and instincts, impressing many fans with her defensive abilities. At 5-foot-4, Leimbach sacrificed her body at every chance she could, at one point flying into the scorer's table.

"She means so much to this program," Ziegler said. "She's put in so much time over the years; she's been a little gym rat. It's hard to replace someone of her caliber."



Lincoln Lutheran on Thursday dedicated its home court to Sue Ziegler, who has won five state volleyball championships at the school.
KATY COWELL, JOURNAL STAR

Ziegler

From D1

in Warrior volleyball."

Ziegler's career accolades speak for themselves, yet her motivation doesn't come solely from winning.

"My dedication comes from the relationships we build," she said. "We are a small school, so we know each other very well. The girls understand each other on and off the court, which makes it a more rewarding career."

Waverly coach Terri Neujahr said Ziegler's influence extends beyond the girls she has directly coached; it touches generations.

"At the high school level, she has given it her all, time and again, and many of the kids she has coached over the years are now coaches themselves — Nebraska high school coaches. She's created a pipeline," Neu-

jahr said.

"Sue has changed lives, not just the game, but lives. She's a legend in the volleyball coaching world. Just saying 'Sue' is enough for everyone to know who you're referring to."

In a state that packed 92,003 fans to watch a volleyball match, having a high school coach's name on a volleyball court further demonstrates the impact of the sport. Given the legacy Ziegler continues to build, naming a court in her honor seems entirely appropriate.

"It's not surprising, not one bit," Neujahr said. "Not many stadiums, fields or courts are named after women alone, so for Sue to get honored like that, I think it's very fitting."

"For Lincoln Lutheran to honor her in that way and allow her to be a role model for all those little girls coming up the ranks as well, it's all just a super cool thing."

Football

From D1

yards and three touchdowns and returned two kickoffs for a total of 94 yards and a touchdown.

Defensively, Bullis added seven tackles, including 3½ for loss.

Conner Brown, Ralston: The senior running back/line-backer was a force on both sides of the ball in the Rams' 44-0 win over Lincoln Northwest.

On offense, Brown ran 23 times

for 177 yards and four touchdowns.

One defense, the 6-foot-2, 200-pounder added a sack, an interception and a fumble recovery.

Thomas Spears, Ashland-Greenwood: The senior

stalwart for the Bluejays caught 10 passes for 104 yards, including the game-winning score with 38 seconds left, in C-1 No. 4-ranked Ashland-Greenwood's 7-3 win over No. 6 Douglas County West.

Spears also had a team-high seven tackles for the Bluejays.

For good measure, he kicked the extra point after his touchdown reception.

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Volleyball

From D1

late when Nebraska had some hitting errors. Alexis Roberson had the kill on set point.

TCU had a .324 hitting percentage in the third set when Nebraska didn't record a block in the set.

Melanie Parra, a third-team All-American last season, led TCU with 14 kills, 10 digs and three blocks.

In the fourth set, Nebraska got a quick lead of 11-5, got its offense back on track and won the match.

In the second set, Nebraska was in

some early trouble when Parra served a 5-0 run for a 13-9 lead. The TCU lead reached 22-20, before Nebraska rallied when Parra had a serving error and the Huskers won three straight points. Nebraska won the set 25-23 for a 2-0 match lead.

Murray had five kills during the set. Nebraska did just enough to get past a great all-around set by Parra — serving, hitting and defense. She had five kills in the set.

Nebraska had its defense executing at a high level from the start, including blocking one of the Horned Frogs' best hitters on the first point of the match. The Huskers led in blocks in the first

set, 6-0. And when combined with 13 digs, TCU had a negative hitting percentage in the set.

Jackson had kills on each of her first three attempts of the match.

NEBRASKA 3, TCU 1				
TCU	15	23	25	13
Nebraska	25	25	23	25
TCU (Kills-blocks-service aces)—Parra (14-3-0), Gibson (11-2-0), Kelley (10-2-0), Roberson (2-3-0), Sylvester (2-9-0), Nicholson (1-1-0). Totals 40-9-0.				
Nebraska—Murray (20-3-1), Krause (9-1-2), Beason (8-4-2), Jackson (8-4-0), Allick (7-6-0), Reilly (3-2-1), Rodriguez (0-0-1), Orr (0-0-2). Totals 55-12-9.				
Assists—TCU 39 (Nicholson, 31), Nebraska 52 (Reilly, 43). Digs—TCU 43 (Bramschreiber, 14), Nebraska 61 (Rodriguez, 18). Hitting percentage—TCU .168, Nebraska .213. T—2-21. A—8,695.				

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